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## A MODERN 'MYSTERY.'

It is generally believed that the rude old drama known as the *mystery* or *miracle* is in desuetude; but in the year 1850 it was represented in the presence of thousands of the curious from all parts of Germany.

During the Thirty Years' War, Oberammergau, an obscure village of Upper Bavaria, was ravaged by a formidable epidemic. The Benedictine monks of the neighbouring monastery of Ettal induced the inhabitants to offer a public vow, that, should the pestilence cease, they would thereafter, every tenth year, publicly celebrate the passion of the Saviour. The pestilence ceased; and from the year 1634 the villagers have religiously observed their vow by representing the mystery of the passion at the specified periods. All the inhabitants took part in the exhibition. The youth of the village appeared on the stage from the few tender years, and by regular gradation were promoted to the principal characters. The villagers already rivalled the Tyrolese in the art of carving on wood, and to this talent they soon associated that of actors, decorators, and scenic artists.

For nearly two centuries, and until the clergy of Munich forbade its continuance, the sacred representation was exhibited. Maximilian Joseph annulled the ecclesiastical prohibition; he required, however, that a few details should be expunged. The conduct of the devil and his followers was a little racy, and their language against the saints somewhat strong and decided. Ottmar Weiss, the village clergyman, an old Benedictine monk of Ettal, was intrusted with the direction of the remodelling, and he performed the task to the satisfaction of his brethren. The drama reappeared with these amendments in 1811. In 1820, it was performed with music expressly composed for the occasion by Professor Dadler. Since this latter date, it has appeared every tenth year. On the last decennial occasion, so large an audience attended that it was found necessary to enlarge the theatre, which had been adapted for the accommodation of 6000 persons. Indeed, at one representation, 3000 were turned back from want of room!

The representations are twelve in number, and succeed each other during the summer and autumn. The last is usually held about the end of October.

Oberammergau presents a curious spectacle upon the morning of one of these representations. From day-break, the villagers are all in preparation. Strangers arrive in crowds, and are received with the most cordial welcome. The solitary village inn is insufficient for their accommodation, and they take their way in small groups towards the mountain-cottages, with

their large projecting roofs and walls of glittering whiteness, adorned by the image of the Virgin, or by frescoes representing some scriptural incident, and surrounded by a garden of flowers. Upon the doorway, according to ancient custom, is written the name of the proprietor. The hospitality with which the strangers are received is disinterested. They are only charged the exact amount of the expense, rigidly calculated, of their entertainment. The mountaineers, proud and delighted at the interest excited by themselves and their drama, use every effort to shew themselves worthy of it. The old and young in every house have some assigned task. He who cannot sing or represent a character, plays on the violin or flute in the orchestra, or assists in the internal works of the theatre. The entire community is transformed for the common profit into a theatrical enterprise. The exhibition, however, can hardly be described as a speculation, strictly speaking. It must not be forgotten that the villagers are skilful carvers in wood, and carry on a profitable trade in this branch of industry. If the time employed in the complicated preparations for these gigantic representations is considered, it will be easily understood that other employments would be at least equally lucrative.

The twelve representations in 1850 produced about 20,000 florins, but the expenses were very considerable.

The pastor of Oberammergau superintends and discharges the duty with ability and care. His powers are discretionary, and it is universally admitted that he understands the peculiar aptitudes of each member of his flock, and exhibits them in the light best calculated to display the dramatic powers of the humblest of his artists.

The solemn moment has arrived; we must pass from the Bavarian village to Sion.

The audience is accommodated in a very large space, fenced off. Only the centre of the stage is closed. It contains a theatre constructed on the usual plan, with movable decorations, and a curtain. On either side of the central theatre, and in the open air, other decorations are visible, whose use appears during the development of the representation. All around, lesser wooden enclosures are observable. These are the apartments of the performers, and the common green-room in which they await their turn for appearance in the theatre. Through the meadow there are tents for the refreshment of the spectators during the fatigues of the coming day, and these accessories must be very agreeable, for the representation does not conclude in less than eight hours, and it is occasionally interrupted by an interval of another hour.

The space reserved for the audience is uncovered, with the exception of three boxes to the back. There is accommodation, as we have said, for more than 6000 persons, upon simple wooden benches without backs; and they sit there during the day in spite of heat, rain, or snow; the last, of course, not being unusual in that mountain valley. The rain has frequently fallen uninterruptedly during the representation, so heavily indeed, that the performers have been compelled, for the protection of their dresses, to take shelter under the red umbrella of the country. As for the audience, they have no alternative but to submit to the rain and snow, and they do so with an amazing forbearance. Those on the back seats will not permit their friends in front to put up their umbrellas, nor even to wear the large mountain-hat, which, in an extremity, might be not a bad substitute.

The price of the seats is sufficiently high. A seat on the front benches, immediately behind the orchestra, costs 1 florin and 12 kreuzers; those behind—in proportion to their distance from the stage—48, 24, and 15 kreuzers. The seats in the centre boxes are 1 florin 48 kreuzers; whilst in the boxes to the side, they are 1 florin 36 kreuzers. It is against all rule to decline this expense; and any one in the district who does not at least pay for attending the performance, is ill regarded in his own neighbourhood, and would be foolish to offer himself for any public office.

The covered central theatre is set apart for the representation of the mystery of the passion, properly so called. The curtain falls at the close of each scene. This curtain represents a spacious street, terminating in imposing mansions on the right and left of the stage. At a short distance, two arched gateways open upon other streets. Before these subordinate decorations, incidents of Holy Writ are portrayed during the interludes. High-mass is celebrated in the church of Oberammergau, and the community prepare themselves devotionally for the exercises of the day. An overture is performed by the combined orchestras of the village and district, the only assistance which the company condescend to receive. The chorus then commences the drama by a prologue, explaining, in its peculiar fashion, the doctrine of the redemption of man by the blood of the Saviour. There are two portraits in illustration: the one shews Adam driven out of Paradise, and the sacrifice of Abraham; the other, the adoration of the Cross. These intermediate representations are mechanical; the actors only appear in the scenes of the mystery. The chorus is composed of fourteen persons, men, women, and children in whimsical dresses, all of the same pattern. They advance in two bands to the front of the stage, arranged like the pipes of an organ, and sing with voices, if not practised, at least in perfect harmony. The music is simple, languishing, and occasionally trivial, such as *Pierse Winter* brought into fashion in Germany towards the commencement of this century. It is agreeable, and occasionally pathetic. The drama itself immediately follows the prologue. The curtain rises, and discovers the entry of the Saviour into Jerusalem. The further end of the theatre is open, and thus a landscape, lit by the light of a real sun, stretches away in the distance. Men, women, old and young, with palms in their hands, cry out: 'Hosannah! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' They press forward before the Saviour, issuing from the stage and the side-streets, and mingle with the priests and

scribes who throng from the other avenues. This scene is full of life and of picturesque movement.

The decorations of the central stage are changed. The Saviour is discovered at the entry of the temple, where the sellers and buyers are carrying on their trade. He is seen threatening the traders, and driving them off; their imprecations are violent: there is a dispute between the priests and the multitude, the priests taking part with the traders, the multitude with the Saviour. All this is represented with precision and energy. The audience is carried back for eighteen centuries; one of the grand old German pictures is starting into life. Of the hundred performers, there is not one who is not absorbed in his own rôle, and does not acquit himself with a singular vivacity of expression, and assist the general illusion. In the choral performance, every word, every exclamation is distinct; even the articulation of the children is intelligible and pure. The appearance of the Saviour has a striking effect, enhanced by the perfect conformity of the actor who personates the holy form with that traditional type which painting has bequeathed to us.

These two scenes are the exposition of the drama that is to follow. The principal performers return to the stage, and one of them describes minutely, in rapid recitative, what has been seen, and what is to follow. The chorus repeats the summary; it then retires towards the pillars of the theatre, and an intermediate tableau shows the twelve sons of Jacob premeditating the murder of their brother Joseph. The chorus, in energetic verse, denounces the guilty brothers; it again withdraws. The curtain rises, and the Sanhedrim is discovered.

To the right and left are seated the members of the Council, and at the further end, Annas and Caiaphas the presidents. They deliberate upon the danger with which Jesus of Nazareth threatens property and social life. Several of the members address the assembly. The traders of the temple, the very men whom the Saviour has driven from the holy place, are there with their formal complaint. The destruction of Jesus is determined upon. This deliberation, which is very protracted, is sustained by the talent and keenness of the dialogue. The chief interest centres in Caiaphas. This personage, with his golden mitre and robe of dark red, acts his part so well that he is almost forgiven his Upper Bavarian accent, and the somewhat too familiar expressions in which he occasionally indulges.

After this meeting of the Council, the chorus reappears on the stage, and introduces two further tableaux—'Tobias taking Leave of his Parents,' and 'the Virgin of the Song of Solomon Mourning for her Betrothed.' These representations are intended to correspond with the scene in which the Saviour at Bethany separates himself from Joseph and Mary.

The Virgin appears in her traditional red robe and blue mantle; her attitudes are borrowed from the most celebrated religious paintings.

In the following scenes, the Saviour is seen at table in the house of Simon; and Mary Magdalene is pouring upon his head the spikenard and myrrh. From this moment the approaching treason of Judas is foreshadowed: the rapacious traitor is in admirable contrast with the divine nature and sublime self-devotion of the Saviour. In the scene that follows—that in which the Redeemer proceeds to Jerusalem to eat the Paschal Lamb—Judas falls into the snare of the traders, and pledges himself to betray his Master.

The fifth scene shews the Paschal Feast and the formal institution of the Holy Eucharist. It is extracted word for word from the text of the evangelists, and is sustained with much solemnity and pomp.

In the sixth scene, the chorus explains the picture

'Joseph Sold by his Brethren;' and then the drama discovers Judas in the Sanhedrim receiving the thirty pieces of silver.

Three pictures connected with the lives of Adam, Joab, and Samson are exhibited in illustration of the approaching scene in the Garden of Olives. Jesus is on the mountain. His three disciples are asleep. Twice the Saviour, in his mortal agony, falls with his face upon the ground. As he rises, the bloody sweat rolls down his face. Judas appears with the guards, and betrays him with a kiss. The Saviour is loaded with irons, and dragged away.

Another intermediate tableau shews 'the Prophet Micaiah smitten upon the Cheek by Zedekiah whilst proclaiming the Word of the Lord to Ahab.' A new series of scenes follow. The Saviour in chains is brought before Annas, who interrogates him. He is reviled and beaten by the soldiers before the house of the high-priest. He is dragged from street to street, from palace to palace; thrust before Caiaphas and Herod; spat upon, forsaken, betrayed, denied by his companions and disciples. He is brought before the Grand Council, who condemn him to die upon false evidence. He is insulted in the courtyard, and taken to the palace of Herod, who receives him with curiosity. There are scenes intermixed in which Peter denies his Master; and Judas, having given back to the priests their pieces of silver, flees in desperation to the wood, to perish by his own hand. The despair of Judas is expressed with striking effect: he tears his hair, casts his mantle from him, rends off his yellow robe, grasps his girdle, and looks with haggard eyes towards the tree which he has chosen to hang from. With savage haste he puts aside the branches, twists his girdle round the strongest he can reach, forms a running-moose, thrusts in his head—and the curtain falls at that moment.

The Redeemer is now dragged before Pilate. Seated in state, and resplendent in the Roman apparel, he offers to the people either Jesus or Barabbas. The people demand the blood of the Saviour. Pilate washes his hands from the blood of the victim, breaks into pieces his baton of office, and flings the fragments from him. The guards seize their victim. The priests and the multitude rejoice over the decree of death pronounced by the proconsul.

As the action proceeds and hurries to a close, the emotion and interest increase. The bearing of the cross has a most wonderful effect. The Roman centurion on horseback opens the procession at the head of his soldiery, formed in double file; in the midst is the Saviour, tottering under the heavy instrument of death; he falls at last, breathless; the procession halts awhile. In the distance advance, in the midst of their guards, the 'good and wicked thieves,' each carrying his cross. Simon of Cyrene stands in the centre of the theatre, and at the opening of a road in front, a group of women and children follow the procession, filling the air with their sobs and lamentations. The Saviour addresses them: 'Weep not for me, but for yourselves, ye children of Jerusalem.' Simon assumes the cross, and the train proceeds amid hooting and vociferations; the Virgin, St John, and Mary Magdalene, with a group of holy women, follow at a distance.

The chorus reappears in mourning garments, with sandals, girdles, and black mantles. The leader utters the recitative to a funeral accompaniment more distinct and louder than before. He proceeds thus:

Approach, thou pious Soul!  
Impelled by love, repentance, and by grief,  
Ascend to Golgotha!  
And see the Mighty Victim die forsaken,  
Bearing thy heavy sins.

He announces that the executioners are fastening the

Redeemer to the cross, and as he does so, the strokes of a hammer are heard behind the curtain. It rises, and Golgotha appears.

The two thieves are already lifted to the tree; there is some delay in attaching to the beam over the Saviour's head the writing which Pilate had commanded. This is done, despite the opposition of the priests, and then the Saviour is carried on the cross into the midst of the theatre. By the help of large wedges driven into the earth, he has the semblance of being fastened to the tree. The soldiers, the priests, and people are picturesquely grouped over the stage, whilst at the foot of the cross, surrounded by her companions, weeps the mother of our Lord.

It is impossible to convey any idea of the effect of this living crucifixion upon an assembly under religious impressions, and agitated by pity and terror. Every word uttered from the cross, every inclination of the forehead girded with thorns, the last sigh, the last words, 'It is finished!' thrill through every heart. The varieties of the multitude pressing around the cross, the ralleries of the priest, the rage and coarseness of the tormentors, enhance the effect. Art could not conceive and execute any representation more overpowering.

And now the two malefactors are taken down from the cross; the thrust of the lance has reddened the Saviour's side; Joseph of Arimathea has obtained permission to bury the body of his Master; the priests, the soldiers, the people retire; all is silent as the grave. The group of holy women and the disciples are around the cross, and the sobs of the Virgin are alone heard. Joseph and another man ascend the ladder on either side of the cross, throw a white garment over the arms and breast of Jesus, and exhibit the immortal painting of Rubens. The sacred body is wrapped in precious cloth, and carried to the sepulchre.

Thunder and the earthquake are heard during the crucifixion; they recur when the body is placed in the tomb, and when the guards attend to watch it.

The roof of the sepulchre is rent in twain; the Redeemer rises in glory; the guards awake at the sound, and fly in terror; the holy women visit the sepulchre, and the angel announces the resurrection of their Lord. The priests endeavour to distort the feelings aroused by these prodigies; and the last representation discovers the Saviour victorious, and surrounded by the faithful, whilst the traders and the priests in dismay prostrate themselves in the dust.

A simple mountaineer named Pfungser, a wood-carver and writing-master, enacted the principal character upon the occasion described, and shewed himself a great artist. An infinite majesty, an unchanging serenity, a touching resignation, characterised this beautiful representation. He invariably produced a solemn sensation through that immense audience, particularly in those scenes where he is stripped of his garments, bound to the martyr's column, beaten with rods, crowned with thorns, and mockingly exposed in his robe of purple to the gaze of the multitude between the two thieves. It is actually said of this man, and no higher eulogy could be bestowed upon his performance, that the public almost believe that he is invested with the divinity which he represents, and regard him with corresponding feelings of love and veneration.

The whole affair is organised by the priesthood, it is sanctioned by their high authorities, and is entertained with reverential feelings by all classes of a wide community; it is, in fact, a great religious festival, and it cannot be regarded as in dissonance with the general views of the Roman Catholic Church to use such extraordinary freedom with the most sacred subjects of human contemplation.



This exhibition is certainly strange, and to Protestant minds may seem in many respects objectionable. We have thought it, however, sufficiently remarkable, both in itself, and as an exponent of the religious mind of a portion of Europe, to be worthy of notice in a British periodical.

## HUSBAND AND WIFE.

### IN TWO CHAPTERS—CHAPTER II.

WHEN at length Isabel was sufficiently composed to return with me to the drawing-room, we found Mrs Vivian at the piano, and her brother listening to her fine voice with evidently extreme enjoyment. I felt vexed to see them thus engaged, for Isabel had no musical talent herself, and I feared, under present circumstances, the effect of the smallest injurious comparison. As I sat and watched Mr Lorimer following note by note with critical enthusiasm and affection for the accomplished singer, I regretted still more that this subtle way of reaching her husband's heart was closed against Isabel. Mrs Vivian rose, however, as soon as she had finished her song, saying: 'I won't bore Mrs Lorimer with my loud voice; I know she does not care about music; and the piano was closed, for neither host nor hostess challenged her assertion. Mr Lorimer began to talk kindly and pleasantly to me, informed me of his departure for Scotland, and mentioned incidentally that he must start so early that he should breakfast by six o'clock in the morning.

'Oh, well,' said Mrs Vivian, 'I shall be up to pour out your coffee: there is nothing so cheerless as to set off on a journey with no one to see that your great-coat is buttoned, and to wish you "God-speed!"'

I looked anxiously towards Isabel, for I could see she was trembling with repressed indignation; she commanded herself, however, admirably, and spoke quietly enough.

'Pray, do not disturb yourself so early, Caroline; I have made my own arrangements for the morning, and propose to breakfast with my husband alone.'

Mrs Vivian shrugged her shoulders, expressive of scornful acquiescence in this new caprice, and Mr Lorimer appeared too intent on the *Bradshaw* he had taken up to hear the remark.

About half-past five on the following morning, I was awakened by Isabel standing already dressed by my bedside. She wished me to get up, and join her and her husband at the breakfast-table.

'I do not know what I may be tempted to say to him, Aunt Sarah, but I feel as if I could not let him go away in his present estrangement, especially when I fear he has such serious business for his object. I have thought for some time past that he has seemed anxious and ill at ease. Oh, he must take me to his heart again—speak to me kindly!'

'But, my dear child, had you not better be alone?'

She thought not; if I were present, I could judge for myself, and I should be no restraint upon her. I thought how lovely she looked presiding at the table in her simple white gown, and felt persuaded her husband must think so too when he came in. But when he did, after a few civil speeches to me, he seemed too hurried and preoccupied to notice anything. He swallowed his breakfast in five minutes, and then rose at once and rang the bell impatiently for the carriage to come round.

'I must be off immediately,' he said, looking at his watch; 'I would not miss the train on any account. Good-by, Isabel.'

What could be done in the way of remonstrance or

entreaty under such circumstances? A man under fear of losing the train is scarcely tolerant of conjugal embraces, much less of conjugal reproaches. Isabel had timed her appeal badly. She stood irresolute, her eyes downcast, her brow clouded. I saw Mr Lorimer had made a movement towards her, as if to kiss her, but turned shortly from her on remarking her attitude. He evidently misunderstood her, for he compressed his lips with an expression of such bitter feeling, though it was but transient, that I felt how deep a current of suffering and disappointment ran beneath his calm and ordinary manner.

'I hope you will not find the country very dull,' he said to me; 'Isabel must do her best to amuse you during my absence; it is very kind of you to come and stay with her. Take care of the children, Isabel.'

He turned and was going. I touched Isabel's arm, and she sprang suddenly forward so as to intercept his way to the door.

'You will write to me?' she asked eagerly—'you will let me know your movements? Are you likely to be long absent?—a month?—six weeks? Lorimer, speak to me kindly before you go away!'

I saw the colour rise angrily to Mr Lorimer's face.

'Why have you reserved your tender appeal till the last moment?' he said. 'Were you anxious for a witness to your protest against my neglect? I shall write to you duly. Don't attempt to delay me another moment.'

He spoke in a hard, severe tone—put her gently on one side, as she blocked his passage—and was gone. A moment after, we heard the carriage roll from the door. Isabel clasped her hands.

'Am I not a blundering fool?' she cried passionately. 'I never make an attempt to heal but I widen the breach. He thinks, now, I am playing a part—wanting to convince you I am a neglected wife!'

She walked restlessly up and down the room. I had not much to say in the way of consolation. I had felt from the first that it was impolitic to have insisted on my presence during the interview, but she had overruled my objection; and I was deeply grieved to see matters were worse between them than I had thought. I had hoped last night that Isabel had exaggerated or mistaken her position.

'And it does not seem so very long ago,' continued she, gloomily, 'that he never left me for a few hours without a tender farewell. I never came into the room but he smiled and gave me a seat near him. He could scarcely pass me without a touch that was a caress; and now—'

'O child,' I said, 'you must have acted very ill!'

'Have I not told you so?' she returned bitterly; 'and do I not suffer for it? He never loved me as I love him now. What long patience he had with me—blind to my selfishness, indulgent to my vanity, giving me so much with such an ungrudging lavishness, and only asking me to acknowledge it and love him! Can I blame his sister that she helped him to discover how unworthy I was?'

'I fear,' I said, 'she still does you harm. She will not be here when your husband returns. I cannot believe, Isabel, that when left alone to exercise a judicious influence, you will not regain the place you have lost. There must be some tenderness left for you in his heart; your love must reanimate it.'

She shook her head. 'No; I despair of it. His love and pride have both been too deeply wounded. He does not believe that what I feel is love, but caprice—the desire to regain power and influence lost. He does not think I love my children; but we cannot continue to live like this. If there is no change for the better on his return, we must part—we'—

The entrance of Mrs Vivian arrested the conversation; she appeared in a most elaborate morning-toilet, and apparently in superabundant spirits.

'It was cruel of you to forbid my wishing my brother good-bye, Mrs Lorimer,' she said gaily. 'I tried to hail him from my window; but the noise of the wheels, or his grief in parting from his Isabel, made the effort vain. I wish my engagements permitted my staying a day or two longer with you till your spirits had rallied.'

This was intended for sarcasm, for, of course, poor Isabel was doing her best to appear cheerful and unconcerned, and, as she had said, she had always succeeded so well in this doubtful *ruse* as effectually to deceive her husband as well as her sister-in-law. Mrs Vivian chatted on while taking her leisurely breakfast, until the effort of repartee became too much for Isabel, and she left the room under the excuse of going to her nursery. Left thus alone with the stranger guest, a sudden resolution seized me. I had been studying Mrs Vivian's countenance for some time attentively, and I came to the conclusion that though her manners might not please me, there was no indication of want of heart or intelligence in her physiognomy, and that I, in my turn, would make a sudden appeal. When she rose, to excuse herself for leaving me, to make her final arrangements for her departure, I begged her to remain a few minutes longer, as I had a matter of importance about which I was anxious to consult her. She reseated herself immediately, with an air of undisguised surprise, then, on a sudden, her brow clouded.

'It is about your niece?—about Mrs Lorimer and my brother. Do not let us speak of it, my dear madam. I should be really grieved to hurt your feelings on the subject; but it is one on which I cannot trust myself to speak calmly.' She was going, her tactics of retreat evidently corresponding with those of Mr Lorimer; but I intercepted her boldly.

'Do let me speak,' I urged. 'I am so thoroughly convinced that Isabel is misunderstood, wronged by both of you; unconsciously, of course, but still wronged. A little explanation'—

But I had chosen my expressions ill.

'Wronged!' Mrs Vivian repeated with flashing eyes—'wronged!'

'I beseech you to be patient,' I said, half smiling. 'I am but a bungling old woman, but I love my niece as my own child, and I cannot witness her unhappiness without some attempt, however awkward, to arrest it. Do you imagine she is happy, Mrs Vivian?'

'Yes, or at least I imagine her to have a constitutional guarantee against the reverse,' was the reply; 'an entire unmitigated heartlessness. Oh, my dear madam, you touch a sore place by your appeal! I cannot contain myself when I think how my brother has sacrificed himself to that girl! Wise men are the greatest fools in love,' she pursued rapidly; 'and when they married, he doted upon her shadow. Nothing he could give her was too good for her, or rather he never considered how much he gave her. I never liked the marriage; but I would have held my peace, and received her as a sister, had she loved him. But she cared nothing for him! How dared she sell herself thus? and accept not only his wealth and position, but his true noble affection as mere tribute to her puerile attractions, without having anything to give in exchange—not even a heart? What did she reckon herself worth? and, good Heavens! how long the man was befooled!'

Mrs Vivian paused, exhausted, and I tried to seize my opportunity. 'Granted that she was guilty of marrying him without loving him,' I said; 'consider the great temptations offered, not by his position

chiefly, but by the ardour of his own passion; and at least she was free from the greater guilt of loving any one else. Ah, I understand your sneer, Mrs Vivian, but I repeat you wrong Isabel. She may have been selfish, weak, and vain, and have had her young head turned by flattery—her husband's flattery more than any other—but she has a heart; she feels deeply, passionately; she repents the past; she loves her husband now.'

Mrs Vivian shook her head scornfully. 'She deceives you, perhaps she deceives herself. She repents the loss of his love, I doubt not, because it involves the loss of her power; she may even, in the spirit of coquetry, be anxious to possess herself of it again. But love—that is, unselfish affection—is beyond her. I think it probable she may dread the consequences of this alienation, but she need not be afraid; my brother is so chivalrous that, did he feel her a heavier burden than he does, he would not shake her off at the expense of her own humiliation.'

My cheek flushed. I felt too indignant to find words. Mrs Vivian perceived it, and continued more gently: 'We view this matter very differently, of course; but you must remember I have this advantage over you—I have been a witness of their married life—of his devotion, patience, and blindness, of her egregious vanity, exigence, and selfishness. But it is over now; she can never delude him again. From the moment he became convinced all his love had been wasted—that there had never been a moment's response to his disinterested affection—that, in fact, she had married him for his money—the enchantment was dispelled. What he has suffered, God only knows. I imagine I hear the tone of his voice now as when he said to me: "She *never* loved me, Caroline; she deceived me from her first kiss;" and can you wonder that my indignation is so strong?'

I was silent. I felt it would be vain to protest.

'I must go,' she said, rising. 'We will not quarrel over this matter—you and I; and she held out her hand with a smile.

'Only one word more,' I said, retaining it. 'If—you may admit it as a possibility—if there should ever be a hope of reconciliation, you will not mar it? I mean, you will not use your influence against the wife?'

'Impossible!' she said; but my importunity succeeded in winning the promise from her.

When Mrs Vivian came down stairs to take her departure, Isabel was standing in the hall, waiting to bid her guest farewell. Little Lily was clinging to her side, timid, tender, and silent as seemed her wont. The sight of the fair mother and child thus linked together seemed to touch Mrs Vivian. Yielding to what was evidently a sudden impulse, she went up to Isabel, and took her hand.

'Good-bye, Mrs Lorimer. I cannot help feeling a kind of pity for you, in spite of your conduct—in spite, too, of your contemptuous disclaimer,' she added, smiling, for Isabel had winced at the expression, and drawing up her graceful neck, looked haughtily down upon the sympathiser. 'Have you any idea,' pursued Mrs Vivian after a moment's reflection, 'what business it is that takes your husband to Glasgow at this particular time? No? I hardly think Lorimer is right to leave you unwarned that there is a fearful chance of your losing all that you value highest. The shock may be too much for you.'

I feared an ebullition of passion from Isabel, but she had learned many a lesson of self-control since I had known her as a girl, and she only looked contemptuous.

'My husband's absence constrains me to bear his sister's insults in silence,' she replied, with an air of dignity; 'and I wish to know nothing that he chooses

to keep back from me. Kiss your aunt, Lily, and bid her good-by.' And so parted the sisters.

It was not entirely a melancholy time that Isabel and I passed together during the protracted absence of her husband. The country was so beautiful, and all the elegant appliances of enjoyment which we had at command were so pleasantly new to me, that I found it impossible to resist external influences. Besides, I have a passion for children, and even had I not, I must have loved Isabel's. Baby Bella was a paragon of infantile vigour and beauty, and Lily had all the exquisite tenderness and sweetness of a child destined to but brief probation. To Isabel it was a great relief to have some one with her to whom she could confide all the incidents, faults, and disappointments of her married life, and who never wearied of speculating with her on her chances of reconciliation and happiness. Besides, she was free to follow the bent of her feelings; she had no part to play, no spurious pride to maintain. Mr Lorimer's letters were not of a cheering character; they were cold and reserved in style, and spoke of his business engagements as of a momentous and disastrous character, without further explanation. Isabel seemed strangely indifferent on the subject, except as it might affect her husband's happiness; but I confess I was not so unworldly. I wrote to my brother, and requested him to let me know what rumours were afloat in London respecting the firm of Glitter & Co. The answer I received alarmed me. Hitherto, I had never heard Robert express anything but the most extreme admiration for the vast extent, financial management, and unlimited credit of the establishment; now, he wrote as if it had been from its commencement a huge swindle. He said its solvency was doubted, its credit shaken, its immense wealth a delusion. 'I believe Lorimer is the only moneyed man of the batch, and when the crash comes, as come it will, as far as his means go, he will have to pay the piper. Had he been the prudent man and affectionate husband I thought him, he would have settled that fine estate of his on Isabel and her children at the time of his marriage. If he has not taken the precaution of entailing it, which I very much doubt, he and everything must go to the dogs.' Then followed unreasonable and selfish regrets for his daughter, 'who might have done so much better,' which I spare the reader.

This letter made me miserable. I dared not tell Isabel, for I did not feel at liberty to do so, when her husband kept her in ignorance of his affairs, added to which, I knew not what measure of belief to yield to my brother's statements. There was nothing for it but to wait; but every proof of wealth, every sign of luxury around me, became irksome and intolerable. Poor Lily's tiny pony-chair, with its miniature steed, to procure which, from its native island, no expense or trouble had been spared—even the very baby's lace robes—assumed a melancholy and sinister aspect to my morbid vision. Isabel's costly dresses, of which she was so careless, distressed me; the daily elegance of the table-appointments, gave me a pang. I went about under a cloud, or rather under a painful illumination which I dared not shed on my companion. The ordeal, however, was not destined to last very long. One morning, about a fortnight after I had heard from my brother, Isabel dropped her husband's bi-weekly letter with a sudden exclamation. I looked up, frightened, yet half-relieved at the sight of her pale face and excited manner. Had the crash come? Had he told her? I perceived she had stretched out her hand eagerly for the morning-paper, which still lay unopened on the table; but her agitation bewildered her. She took it up aimlessly, then put it down, and turned again to the letter, which her trembling hand could scarcely hold.

'Isabel, my darling, my poor child!' I cried, going up to her, and kissing her with fervour—'is—is Mr Lorimer well?'

She put the letter in my hand. 'Read it; give me a few minutes, and then come to me, Aunt Sarah,' and she left the room.

Poor girl! she could not but feel it.

Mr Lorimer's letter began as follows:

'I take great blame to myself, Isabel, that I have kept you ignorant of the state of my affairs until the public papers will announce my ruin to the world at large this morning; but I have hoped against hope that this calamity might have been averted, and your peace of mind undisturbed.'

The *Times* of that morning curtly announced that Messrs Glitter of London had stopped payment, and that their liabilities were supposed to be enormous. There was no comment; the public were to wait for detail and criticism.

When I joined Isabel, I found her walking up and down her dressing-room, holding her baby in her arms. She looked comparatively calm, but there was an expression of deep anxiety in her face.

I began at once to enter on the subject, for I wished to harden her for its discussion.

'Now the blow has fallen,' she said, 'I feel it deeply. I feel it chiefly for my husband, who, I imagine, has never contemplated the possibility of being poor. I cannot conceive how he will meet it. If there is any disgrace attending it, it will kill him, for he is a proud man. Aunt Sarah,' she added passionately, 'do you think this trouble will open his heart to me? Do you think he will allow me to love him and console him? There is not a kind word in his letter, not a relenting phrase. Oh! I know how he feels—more bitterly against me than ever, for he thinks he has lost all I loved or cared for.'

'But now, dear child, you will be able to prove your love.'

'How? Have I anything I can give him—any resource for bread-getting? Oh, it is hard! Lily, my tender flower, will never thrive as a poor man's child. And I—O aunt, I love wealth and ease dearly, dearly! Poverty will be bitter'—Her tears choked her.

'Too bitter a price to pay for your husband's love?' I asked.

I had no wish to blame her inconsistency, or reproach her for her lack of heroism. I knew she was shewing me the conflict of her heart, and it seemed to me but a natural one. She was no disciplined, high-minded woman, but a passionate, disappointed girl, shrinking, at first sight, from the trouble which I firmly believed she would, in the end, find strength and courage to endure and overcome.

'Ah! if I dared to hope that,' she murmured, kissing her child, 'I could bear anything. I shall soon know my fate. Oh! how shall I live till to-morrow!'

Her endurance was not exercised so long; that very evening Mr Lorimer arrived unexpectedly by a late train. The day had been wet and chilly, and Isabel had ordered a fire in her dressing-room, over which she and I were sitting in melancholy mood, wearied of the fruitless yet incessant discussion of chances, at the time of his arrival. Isabel sprang up on hearing the sound of his voice in the hall. 'What shall I do?' she exclaimed, clasping her hands. 'I am so afraid of injuring my cause by over-precipitancy, so afraid of being misunderstood—repulsed. How shall I persuade him that I love him?'

'My darling, it seems to me it has become a very easy task.'

We heard his voice approaching in the direction of our room. 'On no account disturb your mistress,' he



was saying to Isabel's maid; 'she had no idea I should return to-night.'

Isabel threw open the door, and stood smiling in the entrance, her dress, figure, and lovely face touched with a charming illumination from the blazing pine-logs. I thought what a charming, inviting vision she must appear to the harassed, wearied wanderer coming in from the dark night.

Mr Lorimer stopped abruptly; he did not advance towards her. She had not spoken; but though I could not see the expression of her face, the light fell upon his, and shewed me the intent, searching gaze.

'Maurice, dare I give you a welcome?

She sprang forward, and threw her arms round his neck. Is it possible that he can put her from him without a moment's return of the old love—an involuntary response to the thrilling embrace? .Yes; he frees himself gently but coldly, and taking her by the hand, leads her back without a word into the room. He has her now in the full blaze of the fire-light, and he still keeps his hold of her hand—his scrutiny of her face. How altered has his own become; how pale and worn! When he spoke at length, the mingled restraint and anguish of his voice made my heart ache. 'You have not received my letter this morning, Isabel? You are always a careless student of the newspaper? You do not know?'

'Here is your letter; there lies the newspaper. I am sorry, Maurice—I am deeply sorry. I love wealth, as you know; I dread poverty; but if it was the only price at which your faith in me could be bought, I am glad we are poor. I have not always loved you—but I love you now; I have not done my duty hitherto—I will try and do it now. Believe me—help me!'

He turned from her, and covered his face with his hand.

'It is a woman's generosity,' he said; 'the sex's passion for self-sacrifice!'

'It is a woman's passion, a wife's love,' she answered, raising her glowing face. 'Maurice, is it for me to plead?' She made as if she would have knelt before him, and threw her arms round his knees.

I waited just one half-moment to assure myself, with an old woman's love of demonstration, that she did not plead in vain. I saw him raise her in his arms, saw the passionate kiss that sealed the renewed troth, and indistinctly heard, as I flitted away through the dim corridor, the tones of his voice tremulous with more than a lover's fervour.

Three months later, Mr and Mrs Lorimer sailed for Montreal, where the former had a brother established as a merchant. There were not many tears shed by either, for in that time their love and mutual dependence had grown so strong and intimate that no grief seemed intolerable which they shared together. In the arrangement of his affairs, he had been actuated but by one motive—to satisfy every claim as far as the most scrupulous honour dictated, even to the last fraction of his estate. Three hundred a year had been affixed to Isabel by marriage-settlement, but by some legal inadvertency, the deed proved invalid, and her little fortune went in the general wreck. Mr Lorimer regretted the loss, but I know Isabel was glad of it. Her last words as we parted on the deck of the vessel were to me. 'We shall not come back to Old England again,' she said gaily, 'till we have grown rich enough to buy back Morton Leas; so don't fail to let us know when it is in the market.'

This was said ten years ago, and now my old heart beats with the hope of seeing them once more. To-day, I received my periodical letter from Montreal, and what says Isabel?—'We are coming home, Aunt Sarah, to realise my prophecy. Morton Leas is in the market, though you have kept a treacherous silence;

nay, it is doubtless our own already. Tell my father that Maurice says there shall be no delay in making a rigorous entail of the estate; and how proud shall you and I be, my beloved aunt-mother, to watch our boy flying his kite over his inalienable acres!'

#### AN HOUR IN A COAL-MINE.

MANY men who can walk steadily along a precipice would shun a descent into a coal-mine. The weak-nerved, in these two kinds of enterprise, are influenced by two different kinds of weakness. One man, on glancing down from a craggy path into a ravine far beneath, feels his head 'swim,' his nerves tingle, his muscles tremble; and at such a time he is really in danger, whether the path be broad or narrow; for his nervous system—whatever that mystery may be—exerts an overpowering control over his will. The other man, perchance a good cragsman, dislikes the coal-mine because he cannot see his path; he can rely on himself for caution and firmness against visible dangers, but has an uncomfortable distrust of a murky darkness in which his own keen eyes are no more worth than the dimmer sight of a weaker man.

We thought of these things while one day groping along the dark passages of the Lund Hill Colliery. Touching the roof and sides with the finger, we could feel the layer of soot resulting from that terrible explosion which caused so much misery on the 19th of February 1857. Many of the readers of this sheet will perhaps remember that on that day no less than one hundred and fifty hapless men and boys lost their lives in the colliery just named. The pit's mouth is in the neighbourhood of Barnsley, and near the Wombwell Station of the South Yorkshire Railway. The men work in three gangs, eight hours each, and of the two hundred who formed the gang which commenced work at six o'clock in the morning of the day in question, not one-fourth came out of the pit alive. About noon, those above ground felt the earth tremble, and heard a smothered sound, which told only too certainly of disaster. Wives left their simple preparations for dinner, children their play, and all hastened to the pit's mouth. There they soon learned that an explosion of such extreme violence had taken place in the mine as to tear away the drawing-ropes, and destroy the apparatus for ascending and descending the shaft. About two o'clock, volumes of smoke issued from the chimney of the ventilating shaft; and an hour later, a magnificent but terrible body of flame shot up therefrom, indicating the ignition of inflammable gases below, and giving heart-sickness to all the lookers on, who thought the while of husbands and fathers, sons and brothers, down in the fiery bowels of the earth. It was a fearful crisis. The mine was evidently on fire; and no one could go down to aid the sufferers. The managers felt the full extent of their responsibility. If they closed up all the shafts and pits' mouths, it might seem like consigning the poor miners to certain destruction; and yet, if they did not do so, there was danger of the fire spreading and burning with such intensity as to cause the fall of the bed of coal and superincumbent earth, the consequent falling in of the shafts, and the inextricable loss of the bodies of those below. They hastily called a meeting of colliery owners and other persons in the neighbourhood; and it was not until fortified by the approval of all that the managers decided on closing the shafts, and thus smothering the fire. Before doing so, however, several venturesome men descended one of the shafts, rescued nineteen miners who had saved their lives by clustering just at that spot, and then made two hours of exploration under circumstances as frightful as men could well be exposed to: dead bodies, dense volumes of sulphurous smoke, and fiercely blazing masses of coal, were what

they came upon in all the avenues and passages. When the dead and the living, so far as they could be found, had been drawn up, the shafts were closed, and the mine flooded with water, to quench the flames. It was a mournful scene when, after the waters had been again drawn off, the charred and sodden corpses were drawn up, one by one, for Christian burial.

Enough of this. No one has ever known how the disaster occurred; but every available precaution has since been taken, and the Lund Hill Mine is now well ventilated and carefully tended.

Most persons a little acquainted with the geology of our island are aware that South Yorkshire contains one of our coal-fields, which extends into the neighbouring counties of Nottingham and Derby. Some geologists think that it is continuous with the coal-field of Northumberland and Durham, the beds in the intervening region being overlaid by masses of magnesian limestone. The strata range from north to south, and dip from the west towards the east. The 'coal-measures' (or strata) of a coal-field are numerous layers of different kinds of rock and clay, with thin layers of coal between them. Those in South Yorkshire comprise gritstone, shale or clay-slate, bind or indurated loam, clunch or indurated clay, and an argillaceous rock called crow-stone. Between and among these are no fewer than *thirty* beds, seams, veins, or strata of coal. They vary from six inches to eleven feet in thickness, and are supposed by some authorities to present an aggregate of nearly thirty yards of thickness altogether. All these coal-layers are nearly but not quite horizontal; they have a slight descending gradient, as railway engineers would call it, from the west towards the east. Slight as this gradient is, however, it has the effect of bringing the coal-layers almost up to the surface of the ground in some places, and of plunging them to great depths in others.

Now, here we see what are the questions which a coal-digger has to solve. Are the seams thick enough to be workable, and to pay for the working? Is the quality of coal good enough for the market? Is the seam of coal so far beneath the surface as to render operations unprofitable by reason of the great cost? Coal-mines differ one from another according to the way in which these questions can be answered. The deepest coal-pit in England is, we believe, nearly 2000 feet in depth; it can only be worked profitably because the seam of coal is very thick and very rich. Some seams, on the other hand, although near the surface, are so slender in thickness and poor in quality, that they barely pay the expenses of working.

At Lund Hill, the depth is about 500 feet; and we will imagine the reader to be accompanying us in the descent. All around the surface-works are indications of coal—coal-heaps, coal-trucks on railways, coal-screening, coal-weighing, coal being drawn up from gaping pits, coal-trucks being wheeled along stone-floors, coal platforms and vessels drawn up by steam-power, coal-miners coming up nearly as black as chimney-sweepers, coal-miners' wives and children—But, no; these latter are not always black and dirty; the women are decently and comfortably clad; and the children—flaxen-haired in great proportion—are more fresh and rosy-faced than one could well expect to find in this region of carbon. The little toddling things are certainly no worse in health and cleanliness than those in the majority of our agricultural villages—indeed, we suspect that they are richer in these two treasures. The cottages, small and plain, are tidy within compared with much that meets the eye in the great centres of industry. When these upper-ground works have been watched, we accomplish that very easy manœuvre—the 'descent'; we step upon an iron platform, hold by a rail or bar to insure steadiness, and down we go, losing daylight more and more every second, until nothing is left but

pitchy darkness. A great change this from old times. Ladders were then used for the ascent and descent of the persons employed, even if machinery were used for drawing up the corves or trucks laden with coal. In some of the tin and lead mines of Cornwall, these ladders are still in use, and likewise in some of the shallow coal-mines; but the mine-owners are getting more and more into the habit of employing steam-power, to save their people from this terrible leg-work. The shaft is sometimes circular in section, sometimes quadrangular; at Lund Hill, it is the latter. The iron platform works in grooves, which run down the sides of the shaft, suspended by chains or ropes worked by a steam-engine; it is large enough to hold two coal-trucks, or one truck and three or four men, or six or eight men. The descent is rapid and regular, and is chiefly remarkable for the singular way in which daylight appears to die out.

The platform being lowered to the bottom, we step off, and are then in a coal-mine. We are told so, at least, for we can see nothing, except some little specks of light set in blackness, rendering darkness still more visible. The eye takes some time to become accustomed to this state of things; but when, after being supplied with a candle or lamp, we commence groping, we find ourselves in an avenue or passage, leading apparently into 'infinite space'; and gradually we learn how the height of these passages depends on the thickness of the seam. The principal seam now being worked at Lund Hill is below the height of an ordinary man, and bounded above and below by a kind of clay-slate not used for any particular purpose. The coal itself is dug out by picks and other tools, shovelled into trucks, and removed. But this digging is a process in which the skill of an overlooker is constantly needed. Let us suppose that a seam of coal, four feet thick, extends over a square mile in one colliery; all the coal is worth obtaining; yet, if all were obtained, the superincumbent weight would cause the roof of the mine to fall in; hence the plan is adopted of cutting the coal in avenues, say, six or eight feet wide, crossing each other like the pattern of a piece of check, and leaving square blocks between the several avenues. These square blocks support the roof, with the aid of timbers here and there. The blocks might be nearly all removed, if the timbers were numerous and strong, and skilfully arranged; and hence it is a matter for practical experience to determine how much timber, how much coal, shall be made to render this necessary service. Some coal-owners, more grasping than prudent, cut away much coal, and put in little timber; then comes a crash. And sometimes it happens that deserted coal-mines fall in, playing sad pranks with the miners' houses on the open ground above; this occurs in South Staffordshire, which is completely honey-combed beneath by coal and iron mines.

Wandering on for an hour or so in these darksome passages, we become familiar, one by one, with the numerous peculiar arrangements for working the mine. There is the vertical shaft, cutting down through various strata, and laying bare two or three seams of coal. There are the galleries or passages cut into these seams, and branching in various directions; some are called *bords*, some *headways*; some are horizontal, and some follow the dip of the strata; but all alike are intended to facilitate the working of the coal, and the movement of it to the shaft up which it is to be raised. There is the steam-machinery for pumping up the water which gradually collects in the mine. There is the very 'narrow-gauge' railway laid down on the floor of each avenue, and the trucks which run upon those rails. There are the extensive and costly arrangements for ventilation—a *downcast* shaft through which pure air may



be sent; passages and doors for directing this air through every crevice and cranny of the mine; an *upcast* shaft for the ascent of the impure air; and a large fire, burning day and night at the bottom of this shaft, for creating a draught, and thus sucking the foul air from all parts of the mine to that one spot. There are the miners with their candles, extricating the coal from the bed in which it has lain for unknown ages; and their assistants, lading the trucks with the coal; and the drawers—boys sometimes, horses at other times, according to the size of the passages—propelling these trucks along the tram-ways.

The reader will not suppose that these facts all come to light at once. The exploration is verily a 'pursuit of knowledge under difficulties.' The passages are seldom so high as a man, and hence the journey must be made in a stooping position. Here is a beam over us, and a smart blow on the head gives warning to stoop lower; here is a lump of something under foot, over which we stumble; here is a hollow sound, which tells that 'Dobbin' is dragging a little train of coals, but we cannot see him by the glimmer of a few candles in the darkness, and are doubtful whether or not he will run over us; here is a splashing under foot, which tells of puddles not yet thoroughly drained. The odour is 'of the earth, earthy,' modified by that of tallow-candles and oil-lamps; and there is something in the sound of echoing footsteps and echoing handiwork operations, quite unlike that which one meets with above ground. As to the degree of visibility, we have already indicated its nature; the sides, and walls, and floor of every passage are so black, so dull black, that scarcely any rays of light are reflected to the eye; and the candles flitting about appear like bright specks in a measureless darkness. Matters are not quite so bad, however, at the remote ends of the several passages, where the working is going on; here the lacklustre shale and clunch are in near neighbourhood to the bright bituminous coal, which sends forth glancing rays reflected from the candle-light. It is at such a time and place that good coal seems best to deserve the name of 'black diamonds.' If it be the dinner-hour, we come up against the men, sitting or rolling upon the heaps of coals, with very little clothing and very much coal-dust upon their bodies; and if we cannot well understand their talk, it is no wonder, for it is the miners' technical language ingrafted upon the Yorkshire dialect. But they are a simple, honest, hard-working race of men, retaining many of the primitive characteristics of old times. They work, we have said, in shifts of eight hours each, which is found to be quite long enough for hard muscular labour in a stooping position, five hundred feet away from the light of day.

Let us be thankful that one terrible blot is removed from us—the working of women and girls in these black holes. As small boys were wont in past days to be sent up chimneys, because the passages were too small for men, so were boys, girls, and young women sent into those working-parts of coal-mines which were too shallow for full-grown men—and also for another reason, because the wages paid were lower. If a seam of coal be only two or three feet in thickness, the mining is very laborious work. In some pits, the men can only work lying down, handling their picks sideways, in a most awkward manner. But it was in conveying the coal, when loosened, along these shallow passages to the shaft, that the employment of young females was so distressingly shewn. No horse or pony could stand upright in such shallow passages, and therefore manual power was necessary to drive the corves of coal along the passages; and as the young persons were equally unable to stand upright, they went on all-fours, like quadrupeds. Those were terrible

pictures which illustrated the Report of the Mining Commissioners eighteen or twenty years ago—pictures representing girls almost arrived at womanhood, and almost in a state of nudity, walking on all-fours, dragging trucks laden with coals along passages barely three feet in height, by means of chains and belts fastened round the waist, and passing between the legs! Seldom have women been reduced so nearly to the level of beasts. Foreigners pointed in bitter scorn to those pictures, and taunted us with our boasted civilisation. There were some mines in which girls and women descended the shaft by ladders from the surface; walked along passages three or four feet high, to the workings; took on their necks and shoulders creels containing from one to three hundredweights of coal; secured these creels by straps passing round their foreheads; bent their bodies till the creels—something like cockle-shells in shape—assumed a horizontal position; hung their lamps or candles to the forehead strap; and walked painfully along shallow passages, and up ladders, until they reached the shaft, where they emptied the coal into tubs to be drawn up by machinery. It was mournful work; and sometimes the forehead strap would break, and the coal would be precipitated on girls lower down on the same ladder. But the worst features of this are past. Since 1843, no females, whether girls or women, are allowed to be employed down coal-mines; no boys are to be employed under ten years of age; and the coal-owners are bound to admit inspectors at all times, to see that the shafting, the pit-work, the ventilation, and the treatment of the boys employed, are in accordance with the law.

The groping on hands and feet is still necessary in some collieries, for there is no other way yet known in which shallow seams of good coal can be worked and carried. At the Lund Hill Colliery, the seams are not very shallow; miners must stoop, and visitors must stoop; but where there is room for 'Dobbin' to walk along in his daily labours, we know that the state of affairs is not very bad.

This mine, together with two others in the neighbourhood, called *Edmund Main* and *The Oaks*, belong to one of the many companies which find their chief customers at the King's Cross Station. The reader is possibly aware that the Great Northern Railway Company has rendered good service by organising a coal-trade between South Yorkshire and the metropolis. The rails extend without a break from the pits' mouths to King's Cross; and by calculating on the basis of a large trade at small profits, the coal-owners and the railway company have succeeded in familiarising the Londoners with a kind and price of coal unattainable in the old 'sea-coal' days. But the great advantage has been the lowering of price of the sea-borne coal. The Northumberland and Durham coal-owners had formerly quite, or nearly, a monopoly of the London supply; they charged high; and if a severe winter or contrary winds prevented the coal-ships from reaching the Thames in proper time, the retail-price rose to forty, or even fifty shillings a ton. Those days are past. A railway-train can work nearly as well in winter as in summer. If the shippers from the Tyne, Wear, and Tees are too grasping, the Great Northern will give them a hint by underselling them; if the Great Northern is too proud of its South Yorkshire coal, the North-Western will come in with its Derbyshire and Lancashire; if the North-Western is not humble enough in its demands, the Great Western is ready with its Ruabon and Dean Forest and South Wales coal; and thus Londoners benefit by a healthy rivalry. What a mighty subject is this coal-supply of the metropolis! Let the reader imagine, if he can, a consumption of *four millions* and a half of tons every year. This quantity would form a pillar a hundred feet square, and four times as high

as St Paul's; it would form a roadway from London to Edinburgh twenty feet wide and three feet deep; it would wind round the whole earth in a band a yard wide by four inches thick—or it would do many other strange things which a schoolboy with slate and pencil could easily calculate.

## CARLO THE ABSCONDED.

### I.

My uncle Scrymgeour (by marriage) enjoys the singular good-fortune of being 'much and universally respected,' while he is yet living and looking upon the earth, and living well and looking exceedingly healthy too. He is not a very good-tempered person; indeed, with the exception of Mr Carlyle's Frederick's father and the late Mrs Brownrigg of the *Newgate Calendar*, I know of no such domestic tyrant, either in ancient or modern times. And he is certainly not a generous person: the only substantial proof of his regard for his niece—my consort—consisting of a copy of the libretto of an opera, which failed on its first night, some fourteen years ago, and has never been acted since. It is much dog-leaved; could not possibly have cost more than sixpence at any time, even if my uncle did not pick it up at a far more reasonable figure; and has written in a conspicuous manner upon one of its outside pages the words, 'No use to Alexander Scrymgeour.' But the less extravagant this old gentleman is *now*, reflect his discerning relatives, the more he must needs have to give away at last; and the less he bestows upon us in particular, reason they, the greater will surely be the compensatory legacy attached to our name in the final codicil. I am not so perfectly certain of the accuracy of this last conclusion as I could wish; but certainly if Uncle Scrymgeour's posthumous benefits to myself and Jemima are to be in inverse ratio to his favours while in the flesh, we two ought to be a rich couple after all. Why, that most unsatisfactory old reprobate—and I should like that word to stand, however ill-chosen it may seem, since it will afford me an unspeakable pleasure to see it in print—why, that felonious old Scrymgeour, I say, has cost me more time and money in gratifying his whims, than I have ever thought it right to expend on my own personal comforts. The day he dines with us is the herald of a week's destitution; and when he comes to stay with us—and those periods are by no means Angels' Visits in any sense—we could not take more care about letting him take his own line, or make more fuss about crossing him, if he were the Equator himself. 'I have been in all quarters of the world for my part,' says he, 'and there is nothing in the shape of food that I don't like. Any sort of white soup suffices me; and provided the salmon be fresh, you may cut it thick or thin, for all I care. Pray, don't put yourselves out about side-dishes for an old traveller; just a little curry, perhaps, or an oyster *pâté* before my meat; and then with a woodcock, or any little gamey bird of that kind to finish with, Alec Scrymgeour is content. Not but that a kickshaw of apricot-tart or so before the cheese is wholesome; but you will never hear me complain if I don't get it. No, no, nephew, I have been in every corner of the globe, sir, and I know how to rough it as well as most people.'

Considering his advantages as a traveller, he has brought very few specimens home of the wonderful things he talks about. Once, indeed, he was very nearly giving to us a unique shell which he had picked up, he said, on the coast of Patagonia—the twin brother to which I found on Margate sands in the same year—but he couldn't quite bring himself to part with it, and eventually carried it away in a pill-box wrapped up in cotton wool. He is one of that

mysterious band who are said to be 'connected with the Commissariat.' His real title is of quite an amazing length—Deputy-Acting-Assistant-Commissary-General Scrymgeour; but, from motives of modesty, or to save the footman such a tremendous mouthful, he is accustomed to have himself announced in drawing-rooms as General Scrymgeour only. The last scene of his professional labours was in certain out-of-the-way districts of British North America. He is what is provincially termed 'ordinary-looking' (our nurse-maid even says 'sinful ordinary,' meaning a *very* plain man) as we see him in Christian apparel; but when attired in his Canadian costume, he presents an unusually captivating appearance. 'Sir,' said he, when speaking of the latter dress, 'I give you my honour that when in my skins, and claws, and cap made of the fur of the gray fox, you would not know Alexander Scrymgeour from a polar bear.' He was good enough to appear in this attire in our drawing-room one evening, quite unexpectedly, with results that may even now be serious to my Jemima; but my eldest boy, on the same occasion, exhibited all his father's intelligence and courage by presenting the supposed monster with a muffin at the end of a toasting-fork, after the manner which he had seen practised so successfully in the Zoological Gardens.

When I say Uncle Scrymgeour never brought anything back from foreign parts with him—nothing 'to shew for it,' as my wife somewhat obscurely though tersely expresses it—I especially except his last North American mission. He brought back something to shew for *that* with a vengeance, in the shape (only greatly magnified) of an enormous Newfoundland dog. This animal was, I will stake my professional reputation, at least *so high*—I am holding my hand about 5 feet 8 inches from the ground; with a head more than three times the size of the skull of the Welsh giant, presented to my grandfather by the ever-to-be-regretted Hunter, over the bookcase in my study. If he were ever to lose his coat—which I hope may never happen, for he would then indeed be terrible to look upon—it would take four ordinary railway rugs to clothe him at the very least. To give a general idea of his size by comparison with living objects, he was exactly the same altitude as dear Jemima, exclusive of the culminating knob of her back hair. I have (with great satisfaction) seen him whisk his tail, which reminds me of the plume upon the enchanted helmet in the Castle of Otranto, right into Uncle Scrymgeour's eye, as he sat at table, and he is a sort of man that sits high too. He walks over my children as they play without inconveniencing either himself or them; they perceive that an opaque body is passing between them and the sun, and that is all. He is the Great Eastern of Dogs, in short, and ought not to belong to a private person, but to a Company with limited liability. His name is Carlo, but he doesn't answer to it, nor, indeed, pay the slightest attention to anything that is said to him. He is, providentially, exceedingly affable and peaceful, otherwise the question would have to be decided as to whether himself or the Human Race should become extinct; but what he wants to have, he takes. It is best, indeed, to anticipate his wishes as much as possible.

On one occasion, we foolishly imagined that Carlo might wait for his dinner until we had dined, especially as it was Sunday, and we were dining early upon a simple joint; but he convinced us of our mistake in an unanswerable manner. Our dinner didn't come up stairs. We sent Eliza to see what the cook was about with the leg of mutton, and she rushed back within the minute with a face as pale as ashes to say that, as true as it was Sunday, the dog had eaten the cook. 'I see'd him,' sobbed she, 'a-gnawing at her very bones.' My

wife said it was 'impossible,' as ladies always do when any great misfortune has happened, but I did not share her confidence by any means. Uncle Scrymgeour cautiously confined himself to saying, that he had never known the animal do anything of the kind, since he had had him. We proceeded to the kitchen with a hot poker and a dog-whip, so as to be ready for either aggressive or persuasive measures, and there was the gigantic Carlo blocking up the passage of the door, with an enormous bone at his side, very perfectly licked, and no sign of the poor cook whatever. Following the direction of his eyes, however, we perceived her up among the beams where the bacon was hanging, and in perfect security. She had climbed up thither by an effort almost supernatural, and declined to descend until the object of her terrors was removed. She said that she had just dished the leg of mutton, when Carlo walked solemnly in and ate it up, and then sat down at the kitchen-door, as we saw him, waiting for her.

'Pooh, pooh,' said Uncle Scrymgeour, 'it's nothing of the sort; the poor dog only wants his pudding.' Perhaps it was so, but still the thing was very annoying. When my children have a biscuit given to them, Carlo walks up to them, shaking the floor, and extorts it merely by the tremendous character of his personal appearance. He never growls, but his yawn is like the fortifications of Cherbourg—a standing menace; and I am thankful to say that he never barks, for if he did so, the concussion would, like the firing of Mons Meg, break every window in the neighbourhood.

This animal being, therefore, such as I have feebly endeavoured to portray, our satisfaction may be imagined when Uncle Scrymgeour announced his intention of leaving him with us, one Saturday, for a few days, while he himself paid a visit to some other fortunate relative.

'Just see that he is regularly fed, and has enough to eat,' observed he as he went away; 'and mind he sleeps quite comfortably, and on no account omit to take him out for an airing at least once a day, and you need not trouble yourself about him any further. Only be sure,' these were Uncle Scrymgeour's last words, 'that nothing comes near the dog to hurt him (as if a rhinoceros was likely to get into our back-green), and never keep your eye off him for a moment, lest you should lose him; for if anything should happen to that dog, I could never forgive you to my dying day.'

If those words had been all Uncle Scrymgeour meant, I would have poisoned the noble animal in question, as soon as looked at him; indeed, sooner, for I should have liked, of all things, to have been unforgiven by the old reprobate to his dying day, if he would have only recollected me upon it. But what he said implied, as I well knew, a reference to 'that something after death,' which the poet speaks of as having so important an influence over human action—namely, the old gentleman's will.

'How lucky it is we have got a kennel for the beast,' remarked Jemima, as she kissed her hand affectionately to the cab of her departing relative: 'it shan't sleep in that nice room down stairs any more—the nasty thing—he may just depend upon it,' added she, still nodding pleasantly at the vehicle lessening in the distance.

'He depends upon just the contrary,' remarked I, grimly, whereupon we both laughed aloud with the sense of recovered freedom, and the power of paying-out, even vicariously, the common oppressor. A shadow fell darkly over us as we did so, and a portentous yawn informed us that the tremendous animal had been a witness, and perhaps even an intelligent listener, to our conversation.

'Poor doggy, poor dear doggy,' said my wife, hypocritically, for she was exceedingly afraid of the monster—'he shall have a nicey picey kennel to-night all to his own self!'

'And even then,' observed I, 'he will not find it too large for him: it was a tight fit for our poor little Towser; and as for Carlo's getting in at the door of it, you might as well try to put the Britannia-tube into a telescope case.'

'Never you mind,' said Jemima, in a low tone, and looking out of window, as though the weather were her topic of conversation; 'we don't measure the beds before we put our guests into them, do we? How should we know but what the kennel would be perfectly comfortable? Now, do you take the creature out, and let me get our ornaments back again—those at least which he has not already broken with his horrid tail—and make the sitting-rooms habitable once more. I guess my gentleman will never put one of his feet into them again, till his master comes back, at all events. Ugh, take him away!'

I therefore attached myself to an enormous brazen collar which enclosed the animal's neck, and on which Deputy-Acting-Assistant-Commissary-General Scrymgeour's titles were blazoned, and sallied out with him for his first constitutional walk.

I suppose no natural historian has ever been favoured with the advantages, which (without greatly appreciating them) I had conferred upon me during that Saturday afternoon's ramble with the gigantic Carlo. He took me about with him like a post to which he had been ineffectually tied, and that he had carried bodily away with him, to examine every object interesting to his canine intelligence. Up alleys innumerable; down area steps, where we had no sort of business to go; into unsavoury mews, where the Nine were represented by Skittles, or Cocks and Hens; up to cab-stands, placing me in a false position with regard to the drivers, and exposing me to derision and insult; into butchers' shops, where I uttered my warnings oftentimes too late, and after Carlo had secured some bloody trophy, which he devoured with calmness and dignity; through groups of screaming nurse-maids and children, and past policemen, who did not dare to interfere; in ridiculous pursuit of other members of the canine family who attracted his roving fancy; and once, in a hostile excursion in pursuit of a bull-dog, who, with the characteristic audacity of his race, had walked with straight determined legs up to Carlo's very jaws, and then had made off panic-stricken, at fullest speed, as well he might. My position was not only painful and degrading in a very high degree, but threatened to be too much for my bodily strength. I wanted to take Carlo home, and he would not go. A crowd of some two or three hundred persons—chiefly boys and dog-fanciers—pursued me at a respectful distance whithersoever I went. Public opinion, as I heard it very openly expressed, was divided as to whether I was an advertisement to a menagerie then exhibiting in the neighbourhood of the town, or whether I was shewing off the dog to the best advantage for my own private profit, with a view to its sale. Some simple persons applauded me, under the impression that I had thrown myself upon the ungovernable animal, and was restraining it for the sake of the public safety; others assured me, that if any accident should happen, such as the devouring of a child or other valuable, I myself would certainly be held responsible. Sometimes the crowd would press upon us pretty closely, but if Carlo did but turn his head, would retire in billowy masses, executing that brilliant Rifle Volunteer movement called Higgleddy Piggledy, the front ranks tumbling over those behind. However, I did at last succeed in getting home with my precious charge. I spent the remains of a physical energy, which had



never before been so severely tasked, in dragging him up the steps that lead to our main-door. I left him in the hall for half a minute before introducing him to the outside of his impracticable kennel; it was not more than half a minute, I am prepared to take my affidavit—for I had but just swallowed a couple of glasses of London Stout—when I heard the front-door re-open, a sort of hurdling noise as of a tremendous body flying outwards, and a shriek of agony from Jemima, which convinced me that the dread animal had made his escape.

My wife had come in with the pass-key, and Carlo had rushed past her into the gloaming before she could close the latch, or say—if she had been inclined to say anything so inapt and irrational—‘Jack Robinson,’ or ‘Who’d have thought it.’

## II.

I have never read of any situation, either of real life or the melodrama, equal in intensity of horror to mine. The student who, having imparted vitality to the monster Frankenstein, saw it take itself off from his scientific apartments for the first time, may have felt indeed equally responsible for its actions; but then there was no Uncle Scrymgeour, as in my case, to return upon the ensuing Thursday, and demand his missing property. I rushed into the darkening street, and looked around in all directions, but perceived nothing but a man upon a ladder. I naturally imagined this to be some individual seeking safety by that ingenious method from the tremendous quadruped of which I was in search, but he turned out to be a lamplighter. ‘Had he seen a dog so high?’ I inquired, indicating about five feet eleven or so, to allow for the foreshortening, since the man was considerably above me.

‘No, he hadn’t; and, what was more (I use the very words of the vulgar creature), he didn’t believe as I had either.’

At any other time, to have doubted my word would have been dangerous, for I am notorious for my chivalric disposition; but my mind was in too depressed a condition to resent an insult. I passed down the street in the opposite direction, and reiterated my inquiry to a small boy trundling a hoop. He replied: ‘No, sir,’ very respectfully; but as soon as he had got a little distance, screamed out something in a very shrill voice, which I know better than to repeat in these pages. Suffice it to say, that the insignificant atom imagined me to be the worse for liquor. Nobody, then, had seen the gigantic Carlo, who had yet not left my door above a minute and a half. Was it possible, then, that he was that Phantom Dog so continually quoted by the writers upon Indigestion? No; for I remembered the leg of mutton, and the day we went without our Sunday-dinner.

‘Jemima,’ said I, re-entering the house with a haggard air, ‘I want three pounds, if you please, and one of them in silver.’

My consort, who keeps the purse, demurred to this a good deal.

‘My dear,’ observed I, with the calmness of desperation, ‘are you prepared to give up our chance of thirty thousand, and having suffered such things as we have already done from that Deputy, Acting, Ass?’—

She gave up the money before I finished the sentence, and I went out into the desolate night in pursuit of the missing monster.

*The Adventures of a Gentleman in Search of a Horse* have been already written, and have enjoyed a great ‘run,’ as the phrase is; *The Adventures of a Gentleman in Search of a Dog* are now about to be written, and will deserve a similar success. I am sure that I had had a great ‘run’ after the animal in question, although

I cannot say that I enjoyed it. I took my way in as speedy a cab as I could procure to the chief police-office. It was fairly evening when I arrived there, but there was still a little left of that crowd which always hangs around its interesting precincts. From my haste and excited air, they conjectured, doubtless, it was a murder case, and as many of them as had no special reasons against venturing thither followed me into the office. I stated my distressing case with, I dare say, some little flurry and indistinctness, and the principal policeman made me answer him a few categorical questions, while he took down my replies in writing in an enormous ledger. I immediately felt as if I had committed myself, and began to appreciate the feelings of any gentleman who is placed in a perpendicular box and submitted to investigation.

‘About what size is the Newfoundland dog in question?’

‘About so high,’ replied I, indicating the required altitude.

The spectators began to giggle, and the Civil Force to rub their intelligent noses with incredulity and their forefingers; the principal policeman regarded me with doubt through his silver spectacles, and whispered to one of his subordinates.

‘I can’t put “so high” down in the ledger,’ said he presently; ‘it’s like the carpenter’s expression of “about the size of a piece of chalk.”’

‘The dog is five feet eight, if it’s an inch,’ said I indignantly.

‘You believe it to be lost?’ inquired my interrogator insinuatingly.

‘No, sir, I do not,’ replied I; ‘it is impossible that so huge an animal should be lost; if at least there is any meaning in the English language.’

‘Ah! then you have reason to believe it stolen, have you?’

‘It cannot have been stolen,’ replied I with confidence, ‘for no human being could have taken it where it did not wish to go.’

‘Good Heavens!’ exclaimed the principal policeman, laying down his pen, ‘what a very remarkable charge this is! Shall I write that the dog is *missing*, perhaps that will suit you?’

‘I rather think,’ said I, ‘that *absconded* would be the better word.’ The principal policeman shook his head, however, as he wrote down the unaccustomed term in the big book.

‘Now, look here,’ said I, for I had become accustomed to my position, and began to understand why culprits feel it a relief sometimes to cast their shoes at the examining magistrate—‘I don’t want this to be a paper-inquiry only.’

The principal policeman frowned, the inferior policemen coughed behind their hands to express dissatisfaction, while signs of uncontrollable amusement manifested themselves in the crowd behind me.

‘Money,’ continued I, ‘is no object—none whatever.’

The principal policeman’s brow relaxed perceptibly, the inferior policemen removed their hands and smiled, and a voice from the crowd (whose proprietor was incontinently delivered up by the rest, and turned out of the office) exclaimed: ‘O my!’ in accents of admiration.

‘I don’t care what I give, but I must have that dog back; that’s what I mean.’

‘Ah!’ said the principal policeman, in a tone of sympathy, ‘it’s a friend’s dog, is it? That makes it so much the more annoying; a dear and valued friend’s?’

‘Exactly,’ said I, not caring to explain what I privately thought of Uncle Scrymgeour; ‘and he’s worth his weight in gold to him’ (which would, indeed, have been about half a ton of it). ‘It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that every engine—I thought this sounded like an official phrase, and so I used it—‘that every engine should be put in motion.’

'You would wish inquiry to be made at the railway stations, at the turnpike-gates, and at all the outlets of the city, in fact?'

'I should wish, if possible, that the traffic of the city be entirely suspended until that dog is found,' returned I, assentingly.

'His master's name is on the collar, you say?'

'Yes,' said I, with confidence, 'a very great number of his names.'

'Then,' rejoined the principal policeman, after many other inquiries, 'you may rely on this description being read to every policeman upon duty this evening, and, in short, on every means being taken to— By the by, what is the name of the—the—absconded animal?'

'Carlo.'

'The dog answers to the name of Carlo,' said the principal policeman, reading what he had finally written down in the great book.

'No, he doesn't,' replied I; 'his name is Carlo, but he doesn't answer to it at all.'

'Good Heavens!' cried the bewildered inquisitor, 'this is the most extraordinary charge!—'

'It's the most extraordinary dog,' interrupted I, 'I do assure you; and now that every precaution has been taken your ingenuity can suggest, I want a Detective, if you please, to accompany me personally over the town. Yes,' continued I, observing the looks of astonishment interchanged among the Civil Force, 'I do not mean to close these eyes until they behold the missing animal.'

A wise and trusty official was subsequently despatched with me upon this errand, and I also took with me an intelligent medical friend, who devotes his mind for the present to analytical investigations of any kind rather than to patients; he was also in want of a fancy dog for scientific purposes, with which he thought such an excursion might supply him.

It was my first night among the dog-stealers, and I may very possibly be judging them too hastily, but they certainly seemed to me a race of persons unintelligent, or at least exceedingly reserved. They looked ill-pleased and surly, as men might be expected to look who have the taste of puppy-dogs' tails never out of their mouths, and they all averred that they 'knewd nothink about e'er a dog' such as we described. There was, indeed, but one house where anything remarkable took place at all. My friend was informed that a white terrier pup might there be seen, if such a wonder was likely to suit him, the flower of a litter of brown ones, all fine in their way, and constituting, perhaps, the principal wealth of their proprietor. This man was a quiet, almost gentlemanly dog-stealer, and therefore his subsequent conduct astonished us all the more. He had descended through a trap in the floor—not practicable for Carlo, and therefore presenting no opening at all for my requirements—to fetch the puppy, but almost immediately returned with the terrier mother instead. There was a strange look in the man's face as he came up the ladder with the dog in his arms, and the next moment he had dashed the poor animal's head against the wall, and slain it, before we could interfere in the least. It was a brutal murder committed by a man who yet was evidently by no means a brute by nature. His wife and children, who had hitherto remained in some dark closet, rushed out from their concealment to sob and moan over the corpse of their favourite, the staff of their house, the producer of their most valuable goods. Nor did the lady omit to fling some passion-flowers of reproach over the body of the defunct, and at her penitent husband, as he stood ashamed and horrified at his own act. 'I couldna help it,' said he; 'see what the wretched thing has done to her ain bairn!' He drew from his pocket the little white pup upon

which he had set such store, all stiff and cold, with the marks of its mother's teeth in its lily neck.

It was really a dreadful, and even affecting sight, although we managed to soothe the family a good deal before we left by purchasing the poor little white pup after all; for though we could not revive him, we could put him, of course, into spirits. I confess I could not help wishing that Carlo had had a mother equally capricious, and this set me moralising so deeply upon the apparently perverse dispensations of Fortune, that I found myself in a public-house before I was aware, and drinking a glass of punch. It was a bitter cold wind, and the 'early-closing' (Saturday) movement was at hand, so that there was every excuse for us, and particularly as our night-work was by no means over yet. We had now to visit the outside canine establishments, those arches misnamed 'dry' in the suburban neighbourhoods, which, by the help of a few boards and a padlock, afford to philanthropic dog-fanciers such admirable accommodation for lost animals. No proprietor could himself be got to exhibit these interesting repositories; but a personal friend of one of them—or who had been a friend until 'whispering tongues' or other separating cause had estranged him—engaged, after much persuasion, to shew us these mysterious caves. He had many scruples; but not more than he would exchange for a dram; and he got it, and led the way.

Where railways were intended to be made, or had been made and failed; where carcasses of houses, needing no skeleton-key to open them, kept watch over bleak common-land; where wooden outhouses and 'lean-tos' at the back of filthy 'rows' and 'places' threatened to fall to pieces with every blast of the October wind—on these the bull's-eye of our investigation was turned again and again. It fell upon goats of evil odour and ragged beards; upon donkeys with clipped tails and mangy backs; on now and then a pale horse, who, if he bore not Death outside of him, most certainly carried him within; on insufficiently feathered fowls and bantams with draggled tails; on fancy rabbits crowding so closely together that their long ears interlaced, with little else but fancy to keep them warm; and on dogs of every description—except the fat ones—but still there was not one trace of Carlo the Absconded.

The next day was the Sabbath, but it was no day of rest to me or mine. The moving throngs of people without dogs had no interest for me, nor had the preacher any consolation; once only during his discourse did my veins throb and my pulses tingle for an instant; it was when he observed, in a solemn and deprecating voice: 'Turn that big dog out of the church, will you?' But, alas! it was not Carlo, who, indeed, could have picked up few church tendencies from my Uncle Scrymgeour. Half that day, I am ashamed to say, I was mentally occupied in composing an advertisement for the newspapers. The whole of the next I was engaged in seeing the advertisements. Scores of persons, it seemed, had each of them, curiously enough, found a dog of about so high, on Saturday evening; and were all of them honest folks who had kept it, at a great expense to themselves, until it should be claimed by the rightful owner. The coincidence was the more remarkable, as, though none of the dogs were in the least like my dog, they were all (as I was informed) named Carlo, and yet (as I discovered for myself) did not answer to that name.

With agonising slowness, but with the sureness which is peculiar to time and taxes, the awful Thursday morning at last approached. Uncle Scrymgeour was about to arrive, and find no faithful quadruped to bid him welcome. We arrayed ourselves in sombre-coloured garments, and strove to impart a tender melancholy to our demeanour, which might break the news of his great loss to our relative, and incline his

martial, or at least his commissariat soul to pity. I waited upon the top step of our main-door flight from the hour at which the train was due that was to bring him. That train, it mercifully happened, was behind its time. At last I beheld the cab which contained my uncle, or rather, which contained half of him, for he was craning out of window, as his custom is, and poking at the driver with his umbrella, in order to impress upon him, for the fifth time or so, the exact place at which he was to stop. At the same time, I caught sight of a blessed vision appearing in another direction. I beheld Carlo, looking even larger than life, and dragging a feeble young man along with him by his collar—I mean by Carlo's collar—up my street. The two quadrupeds, the dog and the cab-horse, arrived at my door at the same instant. I seized upon the larger animal, bestowed upon the young man attached to him a sovereign (the promised reward in the advertisement), and bade him return to-morrow at the same hour. It would never have done for Uncle Scrymgeour to have heard the long tissue of fabrications which, I saw in the lad's weak eyes, he had got ready to tell me.

'What on earth, nephew, did you give that fellow a sovereign for?'

'My dear uncle,' replied I, in an undemonstrative sort of tone in which affection seemed to be struggling with respect, 'the amount may seem large to you, but not to me. That boy, slim as he looks, is exceedingly agile, and is indeed the only lad in this town who can be safely intrusted with this noble dog of yours. Do you think I could risk the chance, the possibility of loss or misadventure of any kind to anything that you valued, uncle? I think not. What are sovereigns when weighed in the balance with your comfort and serenity of mind! That lad has had the sole charge, as I believe, of the dog's constitutional walks ever since— But here is Jemima. She has been in a most anxious state, I do assure you, sir, ever since you have been away, lest the noble animal should have come to any harm. My dear, your uncle is good enough to express himself pleased at finding Carlo so well taken care of.'— And I have every reason to believe that the old gentleman will die in that simple faith, and leave us his money.

### THE MONTH:

#### SCIENCE AND ARTS.

Owing to the necessity for writing this monthly article some time before publication, the name of a chief of engineering science appeared in our last as acting on a scientific commission, when he was lying in his tomb, among famous men and kings, in Westminster Abbey. Since the last anniversary meeting of the Royal Society on St Andrew's Day 1858, twenty-five names have disappeared from their list of Fellows, and among them are those of Robert Stephenson and Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

The commission above referred to have completed their task, and will shortly publish their report on the best form of submarine telegraph.—In connection therewith we may mention that Mr Wheatstone's newly invented telegraphic instruments and signal apparatus are to be used by the expedition now on its way to China, and are adopted by the London District Telegraph Company, which is, we think, only a preliminary to the further application of these highly ingenious instruments. A social fact in connection with this Company may be mentioned here. At their meeting held a short time since, it was stated that the large number of applications for employment at ten shillings a week from respectable and well-educated young women, 'had both astonished and grieved the directors.'

Professor Wharton Jones has made an important

optical discovery, which, while especially advantageous to persons of weak eyes, will be prized by all who appreciate eyesight. It is a form of spectacle glasses whereby paintings and engravings appear as stereoscopic pictures; that is, the figures and objects are seen in full relief and roundness. The glasses may be fitted and worn as ordinary spectacles, or used in an opera-glass, and with an effect as surprising as it is delightful. To frequenters of picture-galleries—to antiquaries fond of studying Gothic architecture, and the features of old ruins—the new glass will be as a double power of vision. A machine has been made for guiding the glasses, and we hear that they will shortly be on sale.

Experiments have been made at Hull which demonstrate that a steamer may be cut in two and lengthened so as to increase her burden by 100 tons, without any sacrifice of speed, and with a positive improvement in seaworthiness. At the same port, iron steamers are building for the Atlantic Royal Mail Company, which are to cross the ocean at a rate of twenty miles an hour. This rate is actually promised. If realised, it will indeed be a triumph. Another improvement beneficial to navigation is Silver's governor for marine steam-engines—a most valuable appliance in stormy weather, being immediate in its action, affording all the sudden relief required on such occasions, and saving the attendance of the engineer at the throttle valve.—Mr Atherton of Woolwich recognising the fact that iron batteries and mailed ships are not proof against the tremendous shock of the Armstrong gun, recommends that a prize should be offered for a solidifying pulp which, light, tough, and non-absorbent, might be so applied to a ship as to render sinking impossible, and thus leave, as heretofore, our naval contests to be decided by personal bravery.

Those martyrs of science, as we may call them, who formed the Franklin expedition, are still mournfully talked about: the Geographical Society have devoted one of their evening meetings to the subject; the Admiralty have published a map embodying McClintock's discoveries, and marking the spots where the incidents occurred of the fearful tragedy—the unsuccessful struggle for life of five-score English seamen and their officers. The successful result of the final searching voyage must be accepted as some mitigation of regret; and of this voyage the narrative will ere long be published by the well-known publisher of Albemarle Street. Spilsby, in Lincolnshire, Sir John Franklin's birthplace, talks of erecting a statue to his memory: Banbridge, in Ireland, moots the question of a similar memorial to Crozier; and Oxford proposes Franklin's life, labours, and character to her graduates, as the subject of a prize poem.

The Société d'Acclimation have been instrumental in sending a herd of camels and a dozen Arab horses from Algiers to Brazil, where it is hoped the animals will breed and prove of good service while the country waits for highways and railways.—Mr Fortune reports that the tea-plants introduced by him into the United States have not failed, and that the plantations in Upper India are thriving.—The United States government have published ten quarto volumes containing geographical and topographical reports, together with the geology and natural history of the several routes surveyed for the projected railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific in 1853-6 by officers of the War Department. The books are handsomely illustrated with coloured lithographs, figures of the fauna and flora of the country, and views of astonishing geological phenomena. The authorities at Washington, with their usual liberality in such matters, have forwarded numerous copies of the work as gifts to scientific institutions and libraries in this country and on the continent.—The means taken to



procure a water-supply in regions deficient of rivers and springs are succeeding beyond expectation; in Kentucky, Indiana, and Wisconsin, as well as towards the Rocky Mountains, an abundant flow of water has been obtained by the boring of artesian wells; the lands which only wanted water enough to stimulate their fertility, are now bearing excellent crops.

Naturalists, as well as social economists, are interesting themselves in the question which arises out of the fact that the salmon does not cross the equator, or inhabit the southern hemisphere; and our cousins at the antipodes are desirous that their rivers, as yet uncontaminated by the villainous offscourings of towns and factories, should be resorted to by that favourite fish. Some attempts which have been made within the past few years to convey young salmon thither have failed; they are now to be renewed, the proprietors of some of our Scottish fisheries having consented to furnish a supply of eggs and fry in the approaching season; and as these are to be sent out with all the precautions gathered from experience, we may reasonably hope for a successful issue to the undertaking. The Royal Society of Tasmania offer £500 for five pair of living salmon full grown; £2 per pair for salmon smolts; and £1 per pair for fry. Meanwhile, we learn that thirty carp and four dozen thrushes have been safely landed in South Australia, where by this time they are perhaps comfortably naturalised. Is there not something in this indicative of lingering attachment to the old country—to the far-away home? The song of the thrush heard around the farms, and along the edge of the bush, will recall to the exile panting under an Australian sun, a thousand delightful associations of shady lanes and the green-wood of his native land.—We may add to these particulars concerning fish, that an attempt is making on the coast of Norfolk to establish a marine observatory for the study of the instinct and habits of fish, commencing with the herring and mackerel.

In the present state of geological science, with its valuable and interesting relations to modern commercial enterprise, and the almost bewildering vistas which it opens into the past history of our globe, we note with satisfaction the promised publication of Mr Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species*. This, though but a summary of a great work not yet complete, on which the author has been engaged for years, is waited for with something like eager expectation by those who are best able to appreciate its merits; as it will discuss the scientific questions which have of late years occupied the attention of savans and philosophers in all civilised countries.

The Austrian frigate *Novara*, whose exploring voyage round the world we have from time to time noticed, having returned in safety to Trieste, with ample collections of all that men of science think worth picking up in these days, a book is to be published by the imperial government, giving an account of the voyage and its scientific results. Dr Hochstetter, naturalist to the expedition, was so much captivated with the geology of New Zealand, that he quitted the ship at that island, and devoted six months to a study and survey of the province of Auckland. The Auckland Mechanics' Institute elected the doctor an honorary member of their body, and he, in return, gave them a lecture setting forth the results of his survey, of which one of the most satisfactory facts is the existence of large formations of brown coal, valuable for home consumption and the manufacture of gas, but inferior to black coal for steamers on long voyages. Another fact, comfortable to settlers on the flanks of a smoking hill, is, that the volcanoes are dying out.

Dr Krapf's narrative of his missionary labours

and researches in Africa will, it is said, be as widely read as Livingstone's interesting book. It would seem as if all African mysteries were now to be cleared up, for yet another book is to be published at Vienna by Ladislaus Magyar, a Hungarian, who has lived in Africa ever since 1849, where, having married the daughter of a chief, he had excellent opportunities for safe travel and observation, and availed himself thereof to explore certain countries south of the equator which hitherto have scarcely been known even by name.

The last annual report of the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society shews how much may be accomplished for social welfare, and in useful practical results, by steadily working out an enlightened plan of action. So much success has attended the Society's endeavours in Cornwall, that they now call upon inventors in all parts of the kingdom to send their inventions to Falmouth for approval and reward at their annual meeting. They cultivate the fine arts, as well as mechanical science and natural history, and the pictures lent by sympathising friends constitute a highly pleasing feature of their exhibitions. Most noteworthy among the inventions and improvements mentioned in the report are—a new pump-valve fitted with vulcanised India-rubber instead of leather, which promises to render good service in the pumps of mines and engineering works generally; a machine for clothing copper wire for the use of electricians, which coats one pound per hour, and at half the cost of wire coated in the ordinary way; a safety-cot for babies, which can be easily worked by the foot in any part of a room by a person sitting any distance from it, and without risk of overturn; a dipping-needle, by the well-known magnetician, Mr R. W. Fox, which, being constructed of aluminum, is much lighter, and consequently more portable, than instruments made of brass; a miner's theodolite; a shifting-crutch convertible into a walking-stick; an apparatus to enable shoemakers to stand at their work; a model of a steam-engine, with a new side-valve, by a working miner, who had seen a steam-engine for the first time only two years previously; and, in the fine arts, a copy of an oil-painting by a sawyer, 'who,' as the report says, 'shews how the leisure hours of a working-man may be turned to account.'

Our notice may be very properly concluded by a passage from the report, inasmuch as it expresses the pleasure felt by the committee that 'prizes have been awarded in cases where the recipient has had no other means (than through the society) of making his inventions known, and might otherwise have long remained in obscurity; in other instances, they have recompensed ingenious men, who have suffered from continuous disappointment and neglect; in others, they have conferred assistance on struggling artisans with such slender means of support, that a prize even of a few shillings has been a stimulant and encouragement to them.'

It is refreshing to read of endeavours after self-improvement by working-men in a remote part of the realm, while hundreds in London, which claims to be the most enlightened of cities, enact laws to forbid self-improvement, and actually throw themselves into idleness and penury, at word of command. Who would believe that Englishmen could be so misguided? What they suffer may be inferred from a significant statement in one of the registrar-general's weekly reports for October, namely: 'Of bricklayers, 1 died in the week; of bricklayers' children, 8; of carpenters, 3 died in the week; of carpenters' wives, 2; of carpenters' children, 14; of masons, 1 died in the week; of masons' wives, 1; of masons' children, 2; of painters, 2 died in the week; of painters' wives, 2; of painters' children, 9; of plasterers' children, 3 died.'

The large increase in the number of deaths from small-pox has originated a serious question: Is that deadly malady regaining some portion of its former destructiveness? The Medical Society of Geneva offers a prize of 500 francs each to the authors of the best two essays on that question, discussing the disease in its various forms, and the question of whether revaccination is completely and definitively a preservative from small-pox.

#### A CRICKET-MATCH IN CANTON.

PRECEDED by Whang, whose long black tail and dark dress gave him the appearance of a huge tadpole, we set out one evening after sunset to visit one of the most fashionable of the thousand-and-one gaming-houses with which Canton is infested. After about fifteen minutes' smart walking, we arrived at a low narrow door in a dark narrow street, into which we stooped and squeezed ourselves, and, keeping close to our conductor's 'tail,' entered a small room lit by three lanterns as large as regimental double-drums, and of the same shape, and seven or eight oblate spheroids, which were dangled about in the hands of the gamblers' attendants, and by some of the sporting-gentlemen themselves, so anxious were they about the game. '*Teng tow ke!*' cried our conductor, which, being interpreted, means, 'Clear the way!' But we checked his rudeness, and declared we only came as visitors, and did not intend to bet.

In the centre of the room was a round table, ornamented at the edges with a richly carved ivory rim; in the centre of this table was a large porcelain bowl, of a delicate white colour, veined and clouded with very pale tints of purple; round this bowl were assembled some fifteen or twenty Chinese gentlemen, evidently in a state of intense expectation and impatience. At opposite sides of the bowl stood two Chinese attendants, who acted as *backers* of the respective combatants, each being armed with a straw. The play was now ordered to begin.

Two other attendants immediately made their way through the crowd, each with a little carved ivory case having a gold top of open work like an aromatic scent-box. Out of the cases were produced two large crickets. These fighting insects are regularly trained for the contest by a variety of curious processes. They are of a dusky colour, with strong legs and thighs, thick bodies, and broad bull-heads, and have mouths that bite like the front claw of a little crab. The combatants were placed at the same time on the inside surface of the bowl, and, sliding down quickly, came against each other, head foremost, with a dry, crisp, cracking sound. But they immediately drew back, and began to manoeuvre in the air with their front legs. At sight of this, great applause was elicited from the company.

The gamblers, however, soon became too impatient to bear with this display of 'science,' and the backers were ordered to make them 'go to work.' These gentry, accordingly, advanced their straws, and stirred, and turned, and poked the crickets, till the poor creatures became so exasperated at what they evidently thought to be the strong provocation given by each other, that they reared themselves on their hind legs, and danced, and bit, and wrestled with their front legs, and pulled, and scratched, and tore, and rolled over and over, and jumped up and down, and slid about, and bled and foamed at the mouth, until pieces of skin and joints of legs were strewn quivering over the bottom of the bowl.

The Chinese gentlemen were all excited to the highest degree; they also capered, and slid, and jumped up and down, and pulled and scratched, and squeaked and screamed, and frothed at the mouth, while their eyes were all like glittering beads. They

betted for *fly-cakes*—cakes in which small black flies are baked by way of currants; but the thing hazarded is only nominal, gambling for money being contrary to the law. These nice cakes, however, are privately understood to represent money.

I confess I was at last so absurd as to become excited myself as the fight went on, and made several bets of ten cakes, with the understanding that my cakes meant dollars. My friend, Captain Bowling, in order to prevent me being 'done,' hedged all my bets. I felt certain as to which of the crickets would win, for one of them had by this time no atom of wing left, and scarcely half a leg to stand upon, while the other had one ragged wing quite entire at the shoulder, and three good stumps of thighs.

My bets had by this time amounted to one hundred dollars, Captain Bowling having carefully 'hedged' to the same amount with different sporting-gentlemen in the room. No sooner, however, had I made my bet of the last ten cakes, than the cricket which was reduced to a mere trunk, and which, of course, I had betted against, bit the head of his adversary completely off! There lay the vanquished cricket, and there lay its head, with the mouth opening and shutting. I have not the slightest idea how it was done. It all seemed fair enough, and, I may add, with shame in my participation in it, barbarous enough—as bad as our cock-fighting. But how did it happen that my cricket lost? Surely some blackleg longtail must have done the deed with an invisible pair of nippers.

Howbeit, I paid the hundred dollars. Captain Bowling then went laughing round the room to collect his bets, which would just have got the money back again; when suddenly a servant rushed in, as pale as ashes, and cried out that three mandarins and a troop of soldiers were about to surround the house. Down came the large lanterns from the ceiling—out went those in the hand—smash went the porcelain basin—and amid the scrambling rush of the crowd, and the crashing sound of china under foot, I was pushed about in the dark, first one way, then another, till eventually I fought my way out into the street by some other door than the one by which I had entered, and fell over the prostrate body of Captain Bowling, who was lying with his head in a broken lantern, but not hurt, with the exception of a few pretty severe bruises.

#### LYING ILL.

Love! kiss me, kiss me on the lips,  
And kiss me on the cheek;  
And I would that I could speak,  
My heart, my heart so happy pants;  
But I feel lost and weak.

This cup of pain so bitter is,  
And I feel dull with woe,  
And my tears are falling slow;  
But I touch your neck, your rosy neck:  
So I am blest, I know.

O Love, we wedded years ago!  
A blessed bliss for me.  
Love! let me, let me see  
Your blest, soft eyes burn into mine:  
Dear eyes, how kind they be!

I touch your neck; my tears flow down:  
They soothe me while I speak;  
O Love, I feel so weak!  
But, kiss me, kiss me on the lips,  
And kiss me on the cheek.

T. A.

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